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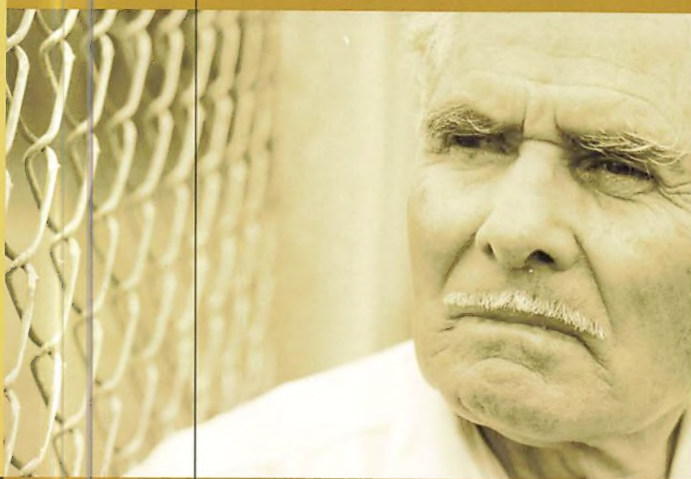


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The Challenge of  
Ministry among  
Hispanic Immigrants



**A Report Prepared for the  
Annie E. Casey Foundation**

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## The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for vulnerable children and families in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the foundation in honor of their mother.

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## Executive Summary

The report looks at the enormous impact Hispanic immigrants are having on American faith institutions. As has been true among earlier groups of immigrants, the presence of strong vibrant faith institutions among Hispanics is critical to the successful resettlement of this very large immigrant group. Today, Hispanic immigrants make up roughly half of the nation's 28.4 million foreign-born residents. Forty-one percent of the total Hispanic population in the United States in 2000 was foreign born. This includes both documented and undocumented immigrants. There is also a rapidly growing second and third generation, and many of them are encountering serious obstacles to upward mobility.

Hispanics from Latin America<sup>1</sup> are overwhelmingly Christians. Their faith is a blend of European Christianity, first introduced by missionaries who arrived on the heels of the *conquistadores*, and indigenous spirituality and symbolism. Immigrants from Latin America bring this uniquely blended faith with them as they settle in the United States. Finding themselves alienated and marginalized, many immigrants turn to their faith for help, and seek out faith institutions for spiritual uplift and material assistance.

Since the majority of Hispanics are Catholics, many have sought out their local parishes. But others have formed small independent Protestant congregations, and still others have joined well-established Protestant churches. All of these institutions – regardless of whether Catholic or Protestant, small independents or big denominational churches – struggle to better serve this ever-growing population.

### The Hispanic immigrants

The new Hispanic immigrants come from a variety of countries and bring a range of resources with them to the United States. A few held positions of wealth and privilege in their home countries and successfully start their lives here. But far more are poor, with little formal education and few job skills.

According to official census figures, 23 percent of all Hispanics immigrants were living in poverty in 2000, double the percentage of the U.S.-born population.<sup>2</sup> Among recently arrived immigrants, the number who live in poverty is much higher. Many experience racial hostility and discrimination from U.S.-born Americans. And those who arrive here illegally live in constant fear of deportation. Poor and disadvantaged Hispanic immigrants often remain isolated from mainstream society years after their arrival in the United States.

In 2000, Mexican immigrants accounted for more than one in four of the foreign-born population in the United States and more than half of those coming from Latin America. The number of immigrants who have come from Mexico is six times as large as the foreign born population from the next highest country – China. In addition to Mexico, the Latin American nations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador are also among the nation's top 10 countries of foreign birth. According to Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates, roughly 5.7 million Hispanic immigrants, or 39 percent of the total, were in the United States illegally in the year 2000. Half of those come from Mexico.

The majority of Hispanic immigrants have settled along the east and west coasts, and in Texas, although the 2000 census shows that many are moving into smaller communities that had previously been untouched by new immigration.



### Barriers to upward mobility

According to the 2000 census, 46 percent of all Hispanic immigrants have a high school education. But percentages range from a high of 76 percent among those born in South America to only 46 percent among those born in Mexico. The mean educational level of Mexican immigrants is only 6.6 years, lower than that of any other group of immigrants.

Eight out of 10 of Hispanics born outside the United States remain at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, where the opportunities for upward mobility are declining. De-industrialization has forced many low-skilled Mexicans and Central Americans into permanent, low-wage service occupations like gardening, food preparation and house cleaning. Since the 1970s, the large-scale immigration of relatively unskilled immigrants who compete for low-wage jobs in the United States has led to an overall decline in Hispanic median family income.

Continuous immigration is increasing the residential segregation of Hispanic immigrants within poor urban neighborhoods. As the size of *barrios* increase, Hispanics become more residentially isolated – although they remain less segregated than African Americans. Many Central American and Mexican immigrants use poor, crime ridden, inner city neighborhoods as launching pads to move into better neighborhoods. Others bypass the old central city *barrios* and settle in communities closer to the suburbanized job market.

Among Latin Americans, the children of Mexican descent are the most likely to attend inner city schools. Over time, they adapt to prevailing norms of their U.S.-born peers, often against their parents' wishes, and to the detriment of their own economic mobility. Research finds that the Mexican-immigrant students and those who maintain a strong orientation to Mexico are far more successful in school than U.S.-born children of Mexican descent. Those living in disadvantaged inner city neighborhoods are also more likely to drop out than those living elsewhere.

Lower educational achievement among Hispanics extends into college. Only 16 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earn a four-year college degree by the age of 29, compared to 37 percent among non-Hispanic whites and 21 percent of African Americans. The share of Hispanic immigrants who have completed high school increased between 1970 and 2000 – to 59 percent from 28 percent. For U.S.-born residents, it grew from 53 percent to 87 percent. But two-thirds of all undocumented immigrants from Latin America have not finished high school.

### The strengths of Hispanic communities

In the face of an alienating U.S. culture, Hispanics draw on the strengths of close knit extended families, ethnic communities and frequent return trips to their home countries as a way of preserving their families' traditional values. Hispanic families display high levels of cohesion and relatively low levels of intergenerational conflict. Hispanic communities are an extension of the Hispanic family. Such co-ethnic communities provide housing, initial jobs for the new immigrants and opportunities for self-employment for those who become more settled. In an effort to protect the second generation against the dangers of poor inner city communities, many Hispanic immigrant parents send their children back home to live with family and attend school. There is also a steady flow between Hispanic immigrants in the United States and their families back home.

### Hispanics impact Christianity in the United States

As devout people of faith, Hispanic immigrants have had a significant impact on North American faith institutions. Bringing their vibrant worship traditions with them, immigrants have both challenged and transformed U.S. faith institutions. Since the majority of Latin Americans are Catholic, the Catholic Church in the United States has once again become a heavily immigrant denomination. Individual parishes located in poor Hispanic communities serve the diverse spiritual and material needs of the new arrivals. At the same time, there has



been an explosion in the number of independent Pentecostal Hispanic immigrant churches. Many of these are small, family-style congregations, with part-time pastors who are immigrants themselves. Although their resources are limited, these congregations provide significant informal services to families in need. Informal services are provided by members of the congregation helping each other on an as needed basis.

There are now also predominantly Hispanic congregations within the traditional mainline denominations such as Presbyterians, Methodists and Lutherans. Although they serve only a small share of the overall Hispanic population, these congregations support some service provision by drawing on their denominational resources.

#### **Service provision among Hispanic faith institutions**

The development of Hispanic faith-based not-for-profit service providers is “just in its infancy.” Given the enormous need, the “Latino faith-based infrastructure is a very weak one.” There are some regional, ethnic, and denominational differences in how and what types of services are provided.

Many of the immediate needs of newly arrived families are addressed at the congregational level. The church is the place where newcomers feel safe. They can network in their search for jobs and other basic resources. Formal institutionalized service provision among Hispanic immigrant congregations remains rare. Congregations rely heavily on informal service provision carried out within a familial setting. Formal regularized services for Hispanic immigrants tend to be found among more established Protestant congregations that have some form of denominational affiliation, and in predominantly immigrant Catholic parishes.

Nationally, there are only a few examples of full-scale Hispanic service providers. These are organizations that may be associated with a particular congregation, but have formally been established as separate not-for-profit organizations. Generally, while they continue to provide direct services, they also address the systemic barriers that block poor immigrants from upward mobility, like a lack of documented immigrant status, English proficiency and job skills.

#### **Networking among Hispanic faith institutions**

One of the most significant trends within current Hispanic ministry are the numerous networks and leadership training efforts that have formed, or are in the process of being formed. They exist at all levels – from local, to regional and national. There is recognition of the need for capacity building and leadership training among Hispanic clergy, particularly in the areas of advocacy and community organizing.

#### **Advocacy and community organizing**

The backlash against the growing number of immigrants in the United States has fueled the emergence of a host of faith-based advocacy and community organizing efforts. Given the size and visibility of the new Hispanic arrivals, they have become the focus of many of these campaigns. Local faith-based community organizing is taking place in regions with large concentrations of Hispanic families. There is also considerable work being done by faith-based advocates of immigration reform.



## Preface

According to one journalist, “Hispanic churches are being primed to be more socially active.” This is no surprise given the growth of Hispanics to become the largest minority group in the United States. As the population rapidly grows primarily due to immigration, the faith leaders that serve this community face the challenge to develop the infrastructure, resources and services to meet the pressing needs of documented and undocumented immigrants, while still ministering to second- and third-generation Hispanics.

Dr. Gaston Espinosa suggests that the willingness exists for Hispanic religious leaders to do more. In fact, the recent study published by the Hispanic Churches in America found that 62 percent of Latinos want their churches or religious organizations to provide social, educational and political services, but only 22 percent had actually been asked by their leaders to develop such services. As Hispanics in the United States face unique challenges in their path to incorporation, this century also signals new opportunities for the faith community to increase their commitment to social service.

This report seeks to highlight these challenges to make the social and community needs of Hispanic immigrants more visible to the broader public. It is hoped that a closer examination of the needs of poor and disadvantaged Hispanics will lead to increased support for institutions that work with these populations, while also opening the door to areas of work that are presently not being addressed by Hispanic faith institutions. At the time of writing, we learned of a Hispanic faith-based organization in St. Louis, Missouri – *Acción Social Comunitaria* – receiving its first grant of \$1.5 million from the Department of Education. While the parenting program of this organization was too early in development to feature in this report, we bring

attention to this organization as a way to demonstrate how quickly Hispanic faith-based organizations are becoming more involved in the formal side of social services.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has commissioned this report in an effort to increase awareness of the family strengthening and community work of Hispanic faith-based institutions. Since the Foundation focuses its work on supporting institutions that contribute to the strengthening of low-income and disadvantaged families, it is most interested in the work of faith-based institutions that support the large numbers of Hispanic immigrants who are most economically vulnerable. Recognizing the central role that family and religion play in the lives of Hispanic immigrants, Casey believes that it is particularly valuable to focus on faith-based institutions as organizations that provide the social networks and services to support and strengthen Hispanic immigrant families.

As new research is being generated by the Institute for Latino Studies and other research organizations, we hope this work adds to the body of knowledge by exploring the particular needs of low-income Hispanics. This work provides important knowledge on the intersection of religious life and culture for Hispanics, and its importance when understanding their unique service. A scan of promising practices identifies the ways indigenous and mainline faith-based institutions address the needs of Hispanic immigrants in ways that preserve culture and respect religious life.

It is our hope that the work conducted at Wheaton College by Dr. Helene Slessarey-Jamir will offer new insights for religious leaders, faith-based practitioners, funders and policy makers that seek to serve Hispanic immigrants and their communities.



## Introduction

Immigrants from Latin America are rapidly transforming U.S. society. They are now the largest group of non Euro-Americans living in the United States, having surpassed African Americans in 2002. This growth comes from continuous large-scale immigration and high birth rates. As of 2001, one in every five children born in the United States had Hispanic parentage.<sup>3</sup> Hispanics also account for roughly half of all immigrants in the United States.<sup>4</sup> The steady migration from Latin America is part of a much larger global migration from the southern to northern hemisphere, as poor and marginalized people leave their homelands in search of a new beginning.

Hispanics are people of deep faith, which sustains them during the process of resettling in the United States. Faith institutions form the backbone of Hispanic immigrant communities in the United States. The practice of faith binds their extended families and communities together by spiritually linking those who now live in the United States with people who have stayed behind. The rituals and worship of their faith affirms their value as children of God and gives meaning to the hardships of their day-to-day lives.

Hispanics are overwhelmingly Christians. Their presence in the here is transforming the face of Christianity in the United States. They are challenging North American Protestant and Catholic churches to become more responsive to people living on the margins and more inclusive of non-North American forms of worship and spirituality. For those Hispanic immigrants here illegally, faith communities are one of the few safe havens in a society that is, on the one hand dependent on their labor, while on the other hand increasingly hostile to their presence. Immigrant faith institutions welcome all who come to their doors, making no distinctions between documented and undocumented immigrants.

This report begins with a brief description of the qualities of Latino faith that distinguish it from common North American faith traditions. Faith-based responses to the hardships that poor Hispanics experience must be shaped to reflect these traditions.

The report goes on to look at available census data on Hispanic immigrants, followed by an examination of the barriers to upward mobility Hispanics face in an increasingly segmented economy. Despite the public rhetoric against continued immigration, the United States relies on poor Hispanic immigrants as an ever-present servant class. Hispanics mow the lawns and bus the tables, yet, for the most part, are treated as unwanted outsiders.

The report then examines several models of how U.S. Christian faith-institutions respond to the new immigrants. All faith-based institutions are being challenged to become more capable of ministering to these new arrivals. This report focuses as much as possible on indigenous ministry among immigrants – ministry that in many cases, is led by people who are new arrivals themselves. There are thousands of new immigrant congregations that are a critical source of comfort and support for people whose lives are in great turmoil. They are joined by older Hispanic congregations that have now become predominantly immigrant.

Hispanic clergy and lay leaders struggle to provide for a wide range of needs among poor immigrant families, with many viewing the church as their only source of assistance. For new immigrants who know very little English, it is much easier to seek help within a culturally familiar context. This is especially true of undocumented immigrants, where every encounter with mainstream institutions is fraught with potential danger.

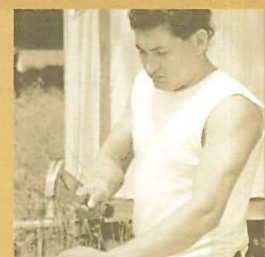
Resources are scarce within congregations comprised of largely poor immigrants and their children. Hispanic churches have a long tradition of informal service provision, where members of the congregation respond to the needs of specific families. Yet, few predominantly immigrant congregations have taken the steps necessary to provide more formal services. Since their members are largely poor, they often lack internal resources required for formal services. Operating within church and state paradigms exported from home, they often lack an understanding of the outside funding possibilities that exist in the United States.



# One

## PART ONE: A PEOPLE OF FAITH

**The Hispanic Immigrants  
Being Poor and Disadvantaged**







## A People of Faith

### By the numbers

Hispanics are overwhelmingly Christians. There are now 480 million Christians in Latin America, second in number only to Europe.<sup>5</sup> Despite decades of Protestant growth on the continent, Catholicism is still the largest single religious presence, with the majority of people defining their faith lives in Catholic terms. Fifty million Hispanics are Protestant, while 420 million are, at least nominally, Catholic. According to official Catholic figures, the two countries in the world with the largest number of believers are Brazil with 137 million and Mexico with 89 million.<sup>6</sup> Catholicism came to Latin America with the Spanish conquest of the New World. Protestantism took root through the evangelistic efforts of missionaries in the late 19th century.

Given the Catholic dominance in Latin America, it is not surprising that foreign-born Hispanics tend to be more heavily Catholic than those born in the United States. Mexican-born immigrants have the highest Catholic affiliation at 82 percent, followed by Cuban born at 80 percent. Of the roughly six million Hispanic Protestants in the United States, the largest percentage belongs to independent churches, with some being mission churches from their home countries. The Assemblies of God, one of the largest Pentecostal denominations, has 2,000 Hispanic congregations.<sup>7</sup> Next in size are Baptists with 23 percent, then other evangelicals at 19 percent, and finally mainline denominations at eight percent.

Judging from their distribution in Los Angeles County, Pentecostal churches have a stronger presence in low-income urban communities with high percentages of recent immigrants, while established evangelical and mainline denominations are more prevalent among second and third generation Hispanics.<sup>8</sup>

### Communal faith

The centrality of ritual, song, dance and celebration within Hispanic Catholicism stands in sharp contrast to the more somber, pietistic European version. Early Christian missionaries embedded the tenets of the faith in songs, dramatizations, personal devotions, pictures, ceremonies and *dichos* (sayings, proverbs) that were easily learned by the people. Speaking of the emergence of Mexican Catholicism, Virgilio Elizondo, a prominent Hispanic-American Catholic, argues that "Christianity was not so much superimposed upon as implanted and 'naturalized' in the Mexican-American way of life. The ensemble of the yearly celebrations of the people is equally the *living Christian creed* of the Mexican-American ecclesial community. It does not so much recite the creed in an abstract way as *live* it out, celebrate it, and transmit it in real life and in life-filled celebrations."<sup>9</sup>

For the Hispanic community, faith stands at the center of community life. "In Spanish the word *pueblo* means more than just living in the city or town, it means to belong to a community, and the



community was Catholic.<sup>10</sup> Hispanics bring this communal, celebratory faith with them as they make their journey northward. Faith links people who come to the North, with their families and communities back home. Its centrality to the Hispanic immigrant experience is captured in the story of a Good Friday procession that takes place at an illegal border crossing outside San Diego.

*Suddenly . . . there appeared a procession dramatizing the Passion of Jesus Christ. Among the participants was a priest who worked with a social service organization providing assistance to migrants in Tijuana. A man dressed as Jesus Christ carried a cross, guarded by others dressed as Roman soldiers. After the various events leading up to Christ's crucifixion were enacted, a Mass was celebrated for all the migrants about to leave for the United States.*<sup>11</sup>

In many poor immigrant neighborhoods where new arrivals settle, faith institutions often provide one of the only remaining forms of social support for people who have become separated from their families at home. Involvement in faith institutions encourages family and employment stability. For youth who are actively involved in religious activities, it provides an encouragement for educational achievement. A study of Hispanic educational achievement found that the children of parents who attended church every week, had the highest reading scores.<sup>12</sup>

### **A family-centered faith**

From birth onward, family stands at the core of the Hispanic religious experience. According to Jesse Miranda, director of AMEN, a coalition of Hispanic Protestant church leaders, "While the United States is very child focused, two-thirds of the world is family focused, with children being seen as part of the family. When Hispanics come to church, they come as a family. They come to the altar as a family."<sup>13</sup>

The family focused nature of Hispanic faith is captured in the centrality of the ritual of infant baptism. The ritual is never thought of as simply

the entry of another individual into the institutional church. Instead, the infant is brought into the collective identity and life of the family, group and people. The child is "accepted and welcomed into the life and memory of the entire family."<sup>14</sup> Through this ritual, the infant is brought into the family within the context of the larger faith community. Local congregations take on the character of an extended family, as members nurture, support and take care of each other.

## **Hispanic immigrants**

In 2000, there were 14.5 million immigrants from Latin America living in the United States. This is roughly half of the nation's 28.4 million foreign-born residents. Forty-one percent of the total Hispanic population in the United States in 2000 was foreign born.<sup>15</sup> Immigrants and their children comprise two thirds of all Hispanics.<sup>16</sup> The number of Hispanic immigrants has grown rapidly since the 1950s. In 1960, about 900,000 people, or nine percent of the foreign-born population, came from Latin America. By 1990, this population had increased to 8.4 million, or 44 percent of the total. In 2000, immigrants from Mexico accounted for more than one-quarter of the foreign-born population and more than half of those coming from Latin America. The number of immigrants who have come from Mexico is six times as large as the foreign-born population from the next highest country – China.<sup>17</sup>

According to the 2000 census, 28 percent of Hispanic immigrants had become citizens, which is lower than citizenship rates among Europeans at 52 percent and Asians at 47 percent. Their median age is 35 years old. The average Hispanic household consists of 3.72 people, with Mexican households averaging 4.21 people, as compared to the 2.54 people average among U.S.-born Americans.<sup>18</sup>

Poor Hispanics are among the most disadvantaged immigrants to arrive in the United States. Since the majority of new Hispanic immigrants are poor,

largely uneducated and lacking English proficiency, they become a part of a vast pool of cheap labor. Only those who are officially recognized as refugees receive any resettlement assistance. While U.S. policy grants automatic refugee status to Cubans, it refused to grant such status to people who fled Central America during the 1980s.

Most of the poor find work as low paid laborers in the agricultural, service or manufacturing sectors of the economy. According to census figures, 23 percent of all immigrants from Latin America were living in poverty in 2000, double the percent of the U.S.-born population.<sup>19</sup> Among recently arrived immigrants, the number living in poverty is much higher. Some experience racial hostility and discrimination from U.S.-born Americans. Those who arrive in the United States illegally live in constant fear of deportation. Poor and disadvantaged Hispanic immigrants often remain isolated from mainstream society years after their arrival in the United States. As is the case with poor immigrants arriving from Asia, their children are at risk for experiencing downward mobility in this country's hourglass economy.

### **Immigration from Mexico**

Immigration from Mexico has been one of the largest and most continuous migration streams in U.S. history. During the 20th century, Mexico has been the largest contributor of new immigrants, with 220,000 Mexicans living in the United States by 1920. After slowing down during the 1930s and 1940s, immigration picked up again in the early 1950s and has increased steadily since then. As a result, by 1990, 38 percent of Mexicans in the United States were foreign born, which is higher than the proportions were in 1950, 1960 and 1970. In contrast to European immigrants, early Mexican immigrants were largely temporary.<sup>20</sup> But in the 1980s, the characteristics of Mexican migrants started to change, with higher proportions of women among the new arrivals, and with migrants more likely intending to settle permanently in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to Mexico, the Latin American nations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador are also among the nation's top 10 countries of foreign birth.<sup>22</sup>

### **Undocumented immigration**

According to Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates, roughly 5.7 million Hispanic immigrants, or 39 percent of the total, were in the United States illegally in the year 2000. Mexico's share of the undocumented population increased from 58 percent in 1990 to 69 percent in 2000. Five other countries from Latin America – El Salvador, Guatemala, Columbia, Honduras and Ecuador – had more than 100,000 unauthorized residents each.<sup>23</sup>

### **Settlement patterns**

Immigrants from Latin America are concentrated in a few regions of the country, although those regions vary according to the country of origin. Three out of four Hispanics born in the Caribbean live either in the New York or Miami metropolitan areas. Those born in Mexico are largely found in the Los Angeles region and in Texas. Combined, these two areas account for almost half of the Mexican-born population. A significant share of immigrants from Central and South America live in the New York and Los Angeles metro areas. There are about 560,000 Central Americans in the Los Angeles area and 750,000 South Americans in the New York area as newcomers travel along well established immigration routes. As a result of these settlement patterns, in two of the five leading metropolitan destinations of the country's immigrants – Los Angeles and Miami – people from Latin America comprise at least half of the foreign-born population. In the Miami region, they make up the overwhelming majority.<sup>24</sup>

While Hispanic immigrants remain geographically concentrated, many of the recent immigrants arriving in the 1990s settled in new growth regions of the country. The growth rate of California's



foreign-born population fell sharply from 80 percent in the 1980s to 37 percent in the 1990s. Mexican immigrants account for much of this population shift as they are rapidly dispersing into these new growth states – many of which have not received significant numbers of new immigrants in over a century. There is a broad band of 22 states stretching across the middle of the country where the foreign-born population grew by as much as 145 percent during the 1990s. The highest growth rates occurred in North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada and Arkansas. As a result of these shifts, the new growth states have higher shares of recent arrivals than California and the other major receiving states.<sup>25</sup>

### Being poor and disadvantaged

The Hispanic foreign-born population varies in their level of economic well being, depending on their racial and class background, and region of origin. The data in Table 1 gives a clear picture of the enormous variation in economic and educational status of the Hispanic immigrant population, based on their country of origin.

Those Hispanic immigrants of European descent, or who belonged to the economic elite in their country of origin, are more likely to successfully integrate into the U.S. economy. Among Cubans and Dominicans, the earliest arrivals were from elite or middle class

**TABLE 1:** Characteristics of Selected Hispanic/Latino Immigrants

	Total Population	% Below Poverty Line	Median Household Income (in dollars)	% High School or Higher
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	35,238,481	22.6	33,676	52.4
Mexican	20,900,102	23.5	33,621	45.8
Cuban	1,249,820	14.6	36,671	62.9
Dominican	799,768	27.5	29,099	51.1
Central American (Total)	1,811,676	19.9	35,517	46
Costa Rican	72,175	16.1	40,041	72.6
Guatemalan	407,127	21.9	34,255	38.8
Honduran	237,431	24.4	31,601	45.3
Salvadoran	708,741	19.8	35,366	36.1
South American (Total)	1,419,979	15	41,132	76.1
Argentinean	107,275	13.8	46,091	80.4
Bolivian	45,188	13.1	47,245	84.6
Chilean	73,951	12.4	42,311	83.1
Colombian	496,748	16.8	38,514	74.5
Peruvian	247,601	12.2	42,333	82.5
Uruguayan	20,242	11.2	44,458	70.9
Venezuelan	96,091	17.3	39,977	88
All data taken from 2000 Census, Summary Table 4, DP-2 and DP-3.				

backgrounds, while those immigrants who came later are poorer and more disadvantaged.<sup>26</sup> In many cases, the early arrivals have become well established in the United States. Cubans have also been advantaged because, as refugees from the Castro regime, they are automatically granted permanent residency. Some Central Americans also came to the United States seeking refuge from political persecution and terror, but have not received similar recognition from the U.S. government, making their process of resettlement more arduous.

Many poor and disadvantaged Hispanic immigrants experience little economic mobility, even after being in the United States for many years. They face a combination of personal and structural barriers to upward economic mobility. With the virtual disappearance of well-paid, unionized manufacturing jobs, workers with few skills and little education are permanently locked into the lower tiers of the labor market. Racial discrimination, residential segregation, poor quality inner city schools, official governmental hostility and a lack of political representation further restrict their mobility.

### **Low educational levels**

Across the board, foreign-born Hispanics are less educated than their U.S.-born co-ethnics.<sup>27</sup> According to the 2000 census, 46 percent of all Hispanic immigrants have a high school education. Yet, that percentage ranges from a high of 76 percent among those born in South America to only 46 percent among those born in Mexico.<sup>28</sup> The mean educational level of Mexican immigrants stands at only 6.6 years, lower than any other group of immigrants.<sup>29</sup>

Although second generation Hispanics are narrowing the education gap, large numbers of them are still educationally disadvantaged. In 1996, 74 percent of all U.S. born Hispanics had completed high school, with Cuban and South Americans achieving the highest levels of educational attainment – 86 and 84 percent respectively.<sup>30</sup>

### **Dead-end jobs**

Eight out of 10 Hispanics born outside the United States remain at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, where the opportunities for upward mobility are declining.<sup>31</sup> The 2000 census reveals significant occupational disparities among Hispanic immigrants – with 23 percent of those from South America employed in managerial or professional occupations, but only six percent of Mexicans. Conversely, 83 percent of Mexicans are employed as service or skilled workers, or farm or manual laborers, while 53 percent of those from South America and the Caribbean work in those occupations.<sup>32</sup>

While the early cohorts of Mexicans coming to Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s enjoyed considerable economic success, since the mid 1980s, immigrant economic opportunities declined sharply.<sup>33</sup> Deindustrialization shifted Mexicans and Central Americans into permanent low-wage jobs like gardening, food preparation and house cleaning. In New York City, Mexican immigrants created niches in the non-union construction industry, apparel manufacturing, Greek restaurants and Korean green grocers.<sup>34</sup> They find employment within supersaturated labor markets by becoming the “perfect proletarians” living only to work and send money home.<sup>35</sup> Within these niche labor markets, Latinos primarily compete with each other



and with the maquila workers who are employed by U.S. firms located on the Mexican side of the border. While other poorly educated immigrants experience similar economic exploitation, the size of the Mexican immigrant population makes competition over scarce jobs even fiercer.

### Declining incomes

Large disparities exist in earnings among Hispanic immigrants, with Mexican men and women earning significantly less than those from the other regions of Latin America.<sup>36</sup>

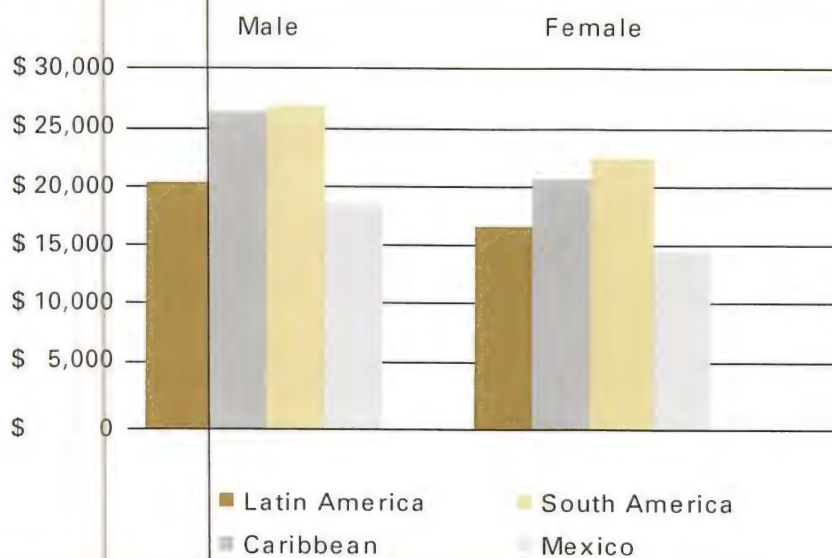
The median income for Mexican-born men is only \$19,200, while earnings for Mexican women is even lower at \$15,100. In contrast the male median income is higher for those coming from regions in Latin America where levels of education are higher at \$27,000 for males from the Caribbean and \$27,500 for men from South America. Survey data of Mexicans and Nicaraguans indicates that in the aggregate, their length of residence in the United States has no effect on earnings.<sup>37</sup> Undocumented immigrants to the United States are even more likely to be locked into permanent low-wage work.

The continued large scale immigration of relatively unskilled immigrants who must compete for low wage jobs in the United States led to an overall decline in Hispanic median family income since the 1970s. The real wages for non-college graduates in the United States declined an average of 30 percent since 1979.<sup>38</sup> Poorly educated immigrants arriving with limited English skills are in an even weaker position within the labor market. The Binational Study on Migration, a joint U.S.-Mexican research project commissioned by Presidents Zedillo and Clinton, found that in 1996, 11 percent of recently arrived Mexican immigrant families had incomes below \$5,000, compared to only 5.5 percent in 1990.<sup>39</sup>

### Growing residential segregation

Continuous immigration is increasing the residential segregation of Hispanic immigrants within poor urban neighborhoods. As the size of barrios increase, Hispanics become more residentially isolated, although they remain less segregated than African Americans. Survey data suggests that this results from the persistence of a significant degree of anti-black prejudice on the part

**TABLE 2: Disparities in Earnings among Hispanic Immigrants, 2000**





of virtually every other racial or ethnic group.<sup>40</sup> In large cities like Los Angeles and Chicago, Mexican immigrants have outgrown traditional port-of-entry neighborhoods, such as the East Side or Pilsen, and are slowly moving into new areas of concentration. In a number of cities, including New York and Los Angeles, they are moving into poor African-American communities, giving rise to new tensions between blacks and Latinos.

Many Central American and Mexican immigrants use poor, crime ridden, inner city neighborhoods as launching pads into better neighborhoods.<sup>41</sup> Others bypass the old central city barrios and settle in communities closer to the suburbanized job market. In Illinois, which now has the fifth largest Hispanic population in the country, the fastest population growth among Hispanics is in the collar counties

outside of the city.<sup>42</sup> In the Chicago metro area, there are five suburban school districts with nearly 30 percent limited-English student populations.<sup>43</sup> Yet, even there, Hispanic immigrants are concentrated in poorer communities. Mexican immigrants living in Chicago's suburbs do have higher incomes than those living in the city, but they have substantially high poverty rates, lower wages and lower educational levels than U.S.-born suburban residents.<sup>44</sup>



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two  
two

## PART TWO: MAKING A LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

### Protective Strategies

Hispanics Transform the Face of Christianity  
in the United States





## Making a Life in the United States

Today's Hispanic immigrants enter the United States under more difficult circumstances than earlier European immigrants. Since 1979, America has experienced the most rapid growth in wage inequality within the developed world. U.S.-born Americans without college degrees have seen a significant decline in their economic opportunities. This trend forces immigrants to bridge the gap, in only one generation, between entry level jobs and professional positions that earlier groups took two to three generations to travel.<sup>45</sup>

Welfare benefits that previously provided assistance to low income immigrants have been eliminated for almost all non-citizens. The children of poor immigrant parents frequently grow up in poor communities that lack the basic structures of economic opportunity. They attend poor quality schools in neighborhoods plagued by violence and drugs. Many immigrant children attend schools that are predominantly non-white. In larger immigrant receiving cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami and New York, at least one-third of the students in the entire school system speak a language other than English at home.<sup>46</sup>

### Experiencing downward mobility

Surveys suggest that Hispanic immigrants remain highly optimistic about their future in the United States, "given that the expectation of better economic circumstances for themselves and their children was inherent in their decision to uproot

their lives and come to the United States."<sup>47</sup>

Yet, given current economic realities in the United States, the process of incorporation for low-income immigrants and their children is enormously challenging. Those children who experience racial hostility in the United States are at risk of embracing an "oppositional culture" in reaction to their social ostracism and exclusion from the economic mainstream. Such an oppositional culture can negatively affect educational outcomes because school achievement is seen as unlikely to lead to upward mobility: those students who are high achievers are seen as sell-outs.<sup>48</sup>

### Declining school achievement among Mexican-Americans

Among Hispanics, the children of Mexican descent are the most likely to attend inner city schools. Over time, they tend to adapt to the prevailing norms of their U.S.-born peers, often against their parents' wishes, and to the detriment of their own economic mobility.<sup>49</sup> They also exhibit lower occupational aspirations and low levels of self-esteem.<sup>50</sup> Comparative studies of various immigrant groups find that children of Mexican origin have lower grade point averages and test scores. Mexicans and Latinos experience dropout of high school more frequently relative to other groups in the United States. In 1995, African Americans and whites had high school completion rates near 87 percent, while the rate for Latinos was 57 percent.<sup>51</sup>



An ethnographic study of students at Field High School in California, found that Mexican immigrant students, and those who maintained a strong orientation to Mexico, were far more successful in school than U.S.-born children of Mexican descent. The Mexican immigrant children's frame of reference was "back home." They worked hard, showed respect to their teachers and reported strong parental interest in their schoolwork. In contrast, the U.S.-born Mexicans lacked positive adult role models and defined success in terms of "working the system." They "focused fatalistically on enduring external barriers to opportunities."<sup>52</sup> They perceived they were being forced to make a choice between doing well in school and being Chicano. The author of the Field High School study concludes that these patterns of declining achievement among U.S.-born Mexicans are the result of "historical and structural forces of exclusion and subordination by the dominant group, as well as the vehicle of resistance that the group has made to structured inequality."<sup>53</sup>

The Field High School study found that while only 35 percent of Spanish surname children classified as having limited English proficiency failed to graduate, a majority of the Spanish speaking children who were U.S.-born dropped out.<sup>54</sup> These findings are reinforced by a study of another community that also found Mexican-born immigrant students less likely to drop out of high school than U.S.-born students of Mexican descent.<sup>55</sup> Those living in disadvantaged inner city neighborhoods are also more likely to drop out than those living elsewhere.<sup>56</sup>

Lower educational achievement among Hispanics extends into college. A recent Pew study found that only 16 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earn a four year college degree by the age of 29, compared to 37 percent among non-Hispanic whites and 21 percent of African Americans.<sup>57</sup>

## Protective strategies

Hispanic cultural traditions that emphasize the centrality of family and community become very important sources of support and strength as immigrants settle in the United States.

### *La Familia*

The family stands at the very center of Hispanic culture. Family and community are interchangeable, with each person "brought into the close circle of friends and family as he or she serves in the community for the good of the whole family."<sup>58</sup> Out of these relationships, bonds of trust and mutuality are established. For immigrants who find themselves within an alien U.S. culture that values individualism and self-interest, the family provides a critical source of support. This is especially true for immigrants with low incomes. Immigrants frequently rely on extended family members for various types of support, including assistance crossing the border, selecting the place they are going to live in the United States, finding initial jobs and providing housing. Long after immigrants settle, their strong extended family ties nurture the second generation.

In *Strangers among Us*, Roberto Suro tells the story of Juan, whose ancestral home is in the highlands of Guatemala. Juan's decision to immigrate to the United States in 1978 results in the creation of a steady stream of more than 2,000 immigrants from his small Mayan village. They settle in close proximity to one another in Houston, Texas. Over the years, each new arrival receives assistance in finding work, with many of the men working for Randall's, a local supermarket chain.<sup>59</sup> These types of family and village migration chains exist throughout Hispanic communities in the United States.

Beyond supporting the economic mobility of low-wage immigrants, the family also transmits traditional values and culture. Strong family bonds can protect immigrant children from the negative effects of assimilation.<sup>60</sup> In their comparative study of children of recent immigrants, Portes and Rumbaut found that Hispanic families display high levels of cohesion and relatively low levels of intergenerational conflict. Mexican American children display the strongest

attachment to traditional family obligations.<sup>61</sup>

Second-generation Mexicans are also the most likely to continue speaking their native language. Latino parents' efforts to preserve their children's native language skills are reinforced by the presence of large Spanish speaking communities and Spanish media.<sup>62</sup>

The strong bonds found among Hispanic immigrant families can lead to placing a greater emphasis on the collective well-being of the family, rather than the advancement of its individual members.

The lower rates of college completion among Hispanics are in part attributed to pressures to earn an income to help support a financially struggling extended family. In interviews done by the *New York Times*, "some students complained about parents who came to this country to work and want their children to do the same – as soon as possible."<sup>63</sup>

### *El Barrio*

*El Barrio* is an extension of the Hispanic family. On their arrival, the majority of Hispanic immigrants, especially those lacking education and English language skills, settle among fellow Hispanics. The initial co-ethnic community may consist of a small group of single men living in a makeshift campsite alongside the agricultural fields where they work 10-hour days, earning minimum wage.<sup>64</sup> Others move directly into urban Hispanic communities. For immigrants from rural backgrounds with limited skills, education and English proficiency, word-of-mouth networking within an ethnic enclave is the primary source of employment.<sup>65</sup>

Co-ethnic communities also provide the needed market for the growth of formal and informal businesses. For example, Little Village, a predominantly Mexican community in Chicago, offers its residents numerous opportunities for informal self-employment. These employment activities aren't conducted from storefronts. Instead, they are done as home-based businesses or on the streets. Street vending is a routine activity, along with car repair, child care and craft work. For some, it supplements income gained in the formal economy. For others, it constitutes their primary source of family income.<sup>66</sup>

### Links to the home country

Among immigrants from Latin America, the continuous circular flow of people and resources sustains close bonds with family and events in their home country. These transnational bonds constitute an integral part of the immigrants' lives with various exchanges between the United States and the immigrants' home country occurring on a regular and predictable basis.<sup>67</sup> Several countries, including the Dominican Republic and Mexico, have legalized dual citizenship, permitting immigrants to become naturalized U.S. citizens, while also retaining their full rights as Dominicans and Mexicans.

Wanting to protect their children from the dangers of gangs, drugs and violence in the United States, immigrant parents often send their children home to live with their families for extended periods of time. In 1998, Dominican educators and government officials estimated that as many as 10,000 students in their schools were reverse immigrants, having been formerly enrolled in U.S. schools.<sup>68</sup> In other cases, second generation youth use their ability to return to their parents' home country as a means to maintain connections with their extended family. Renewed contact with their parent's homeland instills pride in their heritage. This protects them from the negative portrayals of their ethnic group they may encounter in the United States.<sup>69</sup> Cases also exist where the continuous migration between the United States and their home country leaves the second generation adrift, unable to fully adjust to either setting.

### Hispanics transform the face of Christianity in the United States

The large number of new Hispanic arrivals challenges the church in North America. The church itself becomes an expression of the transnational character of contemporary Hispanic migration. Wherever they settle and establish their own parishes and congregations, Hispanic Catholics recreate their vibrant public religious celebrations and rituals on neighborhood streets. Locally, the large numbers of new arrivals challenge the capacity of faith-based service providers. Nationally, Hispanic church leaders



prod U.S. denominations to become more responsive to the multiple ministry needs among Hispanics.

Churches will have to stretch to develop new holistic ministry models grounded in the family and community-centered lives of Hispanic immigrants. In discussing the challenges within his own denomination, Rev. Oscar Carrasco reflected that pastors become accustomed to having office hours, yet most Hispanic immigrants are accustomed to finding the church open at all times.<sup>70</sup> In an effort to increase the effectiveness of Hispanic ministry, Catholics, independent Protestants and mainline denominations have launched new networks and programs.

### Catholics

Given the predominance of Catholicism among newly arriving immigrants, the Catholic Church in the United States has, for the second time in its history, become an immigrant church. Acknowledging that the arrival of new immigrants creates great tensions, Tom Chabolla, former director of the Office of Peace and Justice for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, sees “the Catholic Church as being the largest institution with a dominant place both at the center and at the edge of U.S. society. Those at the center are the earlier immigrants who have now joined the mainstream. Those at the edge are the new immigrants.”<sup>71</sup>

In Los Angeles, where the number of new immigrants is so large, there are large all-Hispanic parishes. In some cases within these parishes, Hispanics are divided into several different nationalities that conduct separate worship services.

Variations of these tensions are playing themselves out in local Catholic parishes across the country, where new Hispanic arrivals confront older entrenched parishioners and clergy who may be insensitive to Latin American spirituality and religious traditions. “When Latino Catholics come to the United States, where religion is more of a private matter, they discover the presence of the Church, but not the presence of the *pueblo*.”<sup>72</sup> The strong sense of community found within faith institutions in Latin America is missing. There are very few Hispanic

clergy in the U.S. Catholic Church, so the majority of predominantly Hispanic parishes have Anglo priests. In some cases, those priests have made great efforts to adapt the gospel to the Latin American context; others are woefully inadequate.

The national leadership of the Catholic Church has committed itself to what it calls a prophetic model “that is rooted in the reality of the Hispanic peoples.” In addition to responding to the needs and aspirations of people who are poor, undocumented, migrant workers, incarcerated, and the most vulnerable, especially women and children, this model “calls for a strong commitment to social justice, for advocacy and action in favor of new immigrant families and young people.”<sup>73</sup> These commitments are embodied in greater engagement on behalf of worker rights, immigration reform and community organizing among some predominantly Hispanic parishes. In many cases, the Anglo priests have either spent many years working in Latin America or have embraced the social justice tenets of Catholic social teaching.

Hispanic parishes, which can have between 2,000 and 4,000 members including many new immigrants, are very active places. They hold five to seven masses each weekend; conduct as many as 65 to 70 weddings in a year, and 20 to 25 baptisms each month. Even though there are multiple priests serving in these parishes, they report being short staffed. They also report being strapped for funds. Even with an active lay membership, priests find themselves constantly reacting to immediate needs, rather than being able to proactively respond. Father David O’Connell, who pastors a parish in South Central Los Angeles consisting largely of poor Hispanic immigrants, admits it is easy to become consumed by the day-to-day work of the parish. He says, “It’s a huge operation. You just react all the time.”<sup>74</sup>

### Immigrant Protestant churches

The majority of Protestant Hispanic immigrants belong to evangelical or Pentecostal churches, many of which are unaffiliated with any larger denomination in the United States. Each church often functions as a family, which can make it inward focused.

The congregations tend to be small, with 100 to 150 members, and an annual budget of \$100,000 to \$200,000. According to Michael Mata, director of the Urban Leadership Institute in Los Angeles, these churches are often “afraid to do anything new that comes from the outside.”<sup>75</sup> For the most part, they are focused on church growth so their emphasis is on evangelism and church planting. As a result, there has been a steady number of converts from Catholicism. Lee DeLeon describes the constant flow of converts, many of whom are Hispanic immigrants, into Templo Calvario in Santa Ana, California. “They receive a lot of help in our church. People come because they have incredible needs. They are under incredible pressure. They come troubled and, when they think of church, they think of it as a cold place because that is their experience back home. They are surprised by the warmth they find here.”<sup>76</sup> These smaller family-focused Protestant congregations are often more welcoming and personal than the larger, more anonymous Catholic parishes.

Although most of the pastors know what the main issues are in their communities, their responses are mainly spiritual, such as starting up a men’s prayer group. Lee DeLeon believes that while Latino immigrant congregations are very traditional, they are open to compassion ministry, but have few of the necessary resources. “They know that members of their congregations have many needs and they want to do work among their own families who are poor and struggling.”<sup>77</sup>

President Bush’s faith-based initiative has created a new interest among these churches regarding capacity building. But according to Martin García, there is a great deal of confusion about what the funds could be used for. “They think it’s money for churches. They ask, ‘Could the President give us money to buy a van or a new sanctuary.’ Many of the churches would like to do evangelism with the money, while not having a clue of how to do community work.”<sup>78</sup>

Many of the clergy of these immigrant churches are immigrants themselves, having either been trained in their home countries or by institutions in the United States that are directly affiliated with seminaries and other training institutes back home. They are often bi-

vocational. Some of them received professional training in another field in their home countries, but turned to the ministry after finding they couldn’t continue in that original field in the United States. They often lack information on a host of delicate professional issues, ranging from the importance of maintaining confidentiality to knowledge of how their own pension and health care plans work. They also find themselves ill equipped to answer immigrants’ many questions concerning immigration laws and medical assistance.

There are also churches that were started by American-born Hispanics and are now attracting new immigrants into their congregations.

### **Mainline Protestant churches**

Although only a small percentage of Hispanic Protestants belong to mainline congregations such as Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists and Episcopalians, these denominations invest significant resources into new Hispanic immigrant ministry. But local congregations situated in neighborhoods that have experienced rapid growth in the number of Hispanic residents are experiencing tensions similar to local Catholic parishes.

Most local congregations are inexperienced in ministering among groups of people who are ethnically different than their own members. This is especially true where an older declining white congregation now finds itself sharing its building with a newly emerging Hispanic congregation. Similar tensions can be found among African-American congregations located in increasingly Hispanic communities. For example, in Los Angeles, there are seven or eight African-American United Methodist Churches in South Central neighborhoods that have become predominantly Hispanic. “The blacks inherited the church from declining white congregations that didn’t know what to do, and now they are in the same position. African Americans are reacting to the demographic changes with shock, dismay and anger.”<sup>79</sup> While these mainline Hispanic congregations are numerically quite small, they are able to draw on denominational resources to create programs.



# three

## **PART THREE: SERVICE, NETWORKING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

**Service Provision among  
Hispanic Immigrant  
Faith Institutions**

**Family Strengthening among  
Full Scale Service Providers**

**Networking and Leadership  
Development Efforts**

**Advocacy and Organizing on Behalf  
of Immigrant Families**

**Descriptions of Promising Practices**

**Conclusions and Recommendations**





## Service, Networking and Leadership Development Efforts

### Service provision among Hispanic immigrant faith institutions

Hispanic immigrants, especially those in the United States illegally, are more likely to seek assistance from a local Hispanic congregation than from a secular agency. This is also true for immigrants receiving funds from the government. Hispanic immigrant faith institutions are quite diverse in the way they provide services and in the types of services they provide. Yet, in light of the enormous need, the “Latino faith-based infrastructure is a very weak one.” The development of Hispanic faith-based not-for-profit service providers is “just in its infancy.”<sup>80</sup>

There are some regional, ethnic and denominational patterns in how and what types of services are provided. On the whole, more formalized services are found in the Midwest and the East Coast. The primary examples of Hispanic faith-based community development work are found along the East Coast. In part, this is due to

differing ethnic contexts, with Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans being more comfortable in leveraging the resources needed from the public sector to undertake larger scale efforts.<sup>81</sup> Work on the East Coast has also been enhanced by the presence of several regional foundations and universities, such as Harvard, that have sponsored programs that train African-American and Latino pastors about how to do development work.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast, Pentecostal and Baptist churches, which predominate among Mexican Hispanics on the West Coast, generally avoid engagement in political matters.

### Informal services

Many of the immediate needs of newly arrived families, such as food, shelter and jobs, are addressed at the congregational level. The local church is the place where newcomers feel safe. They can network in their search for jobs, schools for their children and other basic resources. Within

### CASE EXAMPLE

*Templo Calvario started **Works of Love**, an indigenous faith-based program, as a service provider supplying more than 60 small Hispanic immigrant churches in Orange County with surplus food from its own food pantry. It has evolved into a network of 55 churches and a leadership development effort. Quarterly workshops on topics such as how to partner with government, are one example of how they build capacity in the Hispanic community.*



the Evangelical and Pentecostal immigrant churches, most of these services are provided informally within a familial setting. It is common that as part of the announcements of regular church activities made during the service, a call will be made to assist a new family that has just moved into the area. Job referrals that come from among the congregation's members are also announced.<sup>83</sup>

This is further supported by the results of a survey of 41 Hispanic churches in Cleveland, Ohio, which found that with the exception of food assistance, "there is very little delivery of the more sophisticated and much needed social services." The majority of Cleveland churches provide assistance on an emergency basis, which means "that when a member of the congregation, or someone known to the them is in need, money is collected from the congregation. Alternatively, there is a collection of the specific items needed."<sup>84</sup>

### Formal services

Formal services for Hispanic immigrants tend to be found among more established Protestant congregations that have some form of denominational affiliation, and in predominantly immigrant Catholic parishes. According to the responses given by mainline Protestant and Catholic Church leaders to the PARAL National Survey of Leadership in Latino Parishes and Congregations, most are involved in distributing food, clothing and money. More than 50 percent of the Latino clergy and lay leaders in the nine denominations in the PARAL offered these services.<sup>85</sup>

For mainline Protestants, services often serve as a means to attract new members from the community into the church. English as a second language, food pantries and tutoring programs are among the most common types of services found within these congregations. Although these services are regularized, they still are largely dependent on the volunteer efforts of members of the congregation.

Given their limited financial resources, few congregations can provide the extensive services found at St. Pius V (See case example page 36).

A more common strategy is for a cluster of churches to pool their resources so they jointly sponsor a faith-based neighborhood service center or neighborhood development corporation.

### Family strengthening among full-scale service providers

Nationally, only a few examples exist of full-scale Hispanic service providers. These are organizations that may be associated with a particular congregation, but have formally been established as separate not-for-profit organizations. Generally, while they continue to provide direct services, they also address the systemic barriers that block poor immigrants from upward mobility. To accomplish this, they implement a wide array of programs like English as a second language, after-school tutoring, job training, affordable housing construction, gang prevention and job creation. They work in predominantly Hispanic communities where foreign- and native-born residents live side by side. Their programs are designed to the specific needs of poor Hispanic communities. They all also exhibit a strong commitment to pastoral training and leadership development within the Hispanic church.

### Networking and leadership development efforts

One of the most significant trends within current Hispanic ministry is the numerous networks and leadership training efforts that have formed, or are in the process of being formed. They exist at all levels – from local, to regional and national. Dr. Jesse Miranda, director of urban and ethnic studies at Vanguard University, initiated the earliest national network among Latino pastors, known as AMEN. There is clearly recognition of the need for capacity building and leadership training among these clergy.

The staff at World Vision Los Angeles, is initiating the creation of a regional Hispanic clergy network that will be known as La Alianza. A core group from eight different denominations is engaged in a strategic

planning process to create concrete programs to begin in 2004. According to Martin Garcia, the staff person at World Vision, this is “the first time a very diverse group of Latino clergy from Southern California is trying to address issues that are affecting their parishioners and Latinos in general.”<sup>86</sup>

Vision L.A. is already working with a network of Hispanic pastors to provide training on how to:

- address congregation members’ immigration issues,
- network with local government and other community organizations,
- respond to a natural disaster or other emergency, and
- build the capacity needed to develop programs in local communities that includes learning how to form 501(c)3 organizations, access funds available under President Bush’s faith-based initiative, and do community assessments.

These four areas are an outgrowth of meetings with denominational leaders and focus groups that tried to determine the main issues facing Hispanic Protestant churches. However, as a result of the capacity training that World Vision tailored for Latino pastors, they are now rewriting the curriculum so it can be used by other churches, including those representing other ethnic groups.

Both World Vision and Nueva Esperanza make the importance of community development, as an aspect of ministry, more a part of the conversation. According to Reverend Noel Castellanos who heads the Latino Leadership Foundation, “the whole faith-based initiative, while not effective in mobilizing Latino congregations, has at least increased the interest in seeing what we can do.”<sup>87</sup>

In 2001, the federal government made new resources available to do capacity building among Hispanic churches. Nueva Esperanza received a contract from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to do capacity building among Hispanic churches in five regions in the country. Nueva Esperanza is in the second round of the Hispanic Capacity Project,

having received \$4 million so far. The participating organizations report changes in their organizational structure, improvements in their organizational documents, an increased focus on their community service and an increased understanding and striving for organizational excellence. Participants also note the training was more valuable to them than the opportunity to access funds or receive direct technical assistance.<sup>88</sup>

## **Advocacy and organizing on behalf of immigrant families**

The capacity of local governments and school districts to provide services to new Hispanic immigrants has been strained in those parts of the country that have experienced the largest numbers of new arrivals. This has led to a rise in hostility against immigrants among some U.S.-born Americans that provided the fuel for a political backlash against undocumented immigrants in the early 1990s. In response, a host of faith-based advocacy and community organizing efforts developed to defend immigrant rights. Given the size and visibility of the new Hispanic arrivals, they have become the focus of many of these campaigns. Local faith-based community organizing takes place in regions with large concentrations of Hispanic families. There is also considerable work being done by faith-based advocates of immigration reform.

## **Descriptions of promising practices**

The promising practices that follow are designed to serve as examples of the various forms of Hispanic immigrant ministry identified in this report. Taken as a whole, the organizations encompass the range of work currently taking place. It includes examples of both Catholic and Protestant; church and para-church; and organizations run by volunteers and those that rely on paid staff. It includes at least one example from every region in the country where Hispanic immigrants are now concentrated.



## Annunciation House

Mr. Ruben L. Garcia, Director

1003 East San Antonio  
El Paso, TX 7990  
Phone: (915) 533-4675

**Mission:** From that day in February of 1978 when the doors first opened, the volunteers of Annunciation House try to simply live the "Good News" of the Gospel. And it has been the experience of their own deep hunger for meaning and purpose in life that led them to seek out Jesus where he is most present, most touchable and most vibrant. It is out of a sense of their own poverty that they go in search of where that emptiness can best be filled, can best be healed and nourished. The volunteer worker must know that Jesus demands solidarity with and among all of his poor because it is in the wounded poor and oppressed that he brings about his kingdom and the world's redemption.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Catholic

**Organization History:** Annunciation House has provided hospitality to immigrants and refugees on the U.S.-Mexican border for the past 25 years. It has grown from its original single house to include Casa Vides, a house of hospitality for those seeking political asylum and those with longer-term needs, and Casa Peregrina in Juarez Mexico, a house that provides hospitality to women and children. A fourth house, Casa Emmaus is located in a squatter's neighborhood and provides support and space for various community-building efforts.

**Clientele:** The House realized that in El Paso an entire group of undocumented people existed who were unable to receive any of the social services ordinarily available to people who are poor. There was no place for the undocumented to receive basic services like food, shelter, clothing and basic medical attention. They were among the poorest of the poor in El Paso and Annunciation House made the decision to focus on them.

**Staff:** Full-time volunteer staff of 20.

**Funding:** The programs are sustained by individual contributions and donations.

**Programs:** The hospitality offered includes emergency food, shelter and clothing. The staff provides networking to immigration and asylum counselors. Other social services are also available including basic health care, office and computer work, building maintenance, construction trades and community development in the specific border community of El Paso and Juarez.

## **Bay Ridge Christian Center**

**Apostle Luciano Padilla Jr. (Pastor)**

**Rev. Iris Sanchez (Mission of Mercy)**

221 51 St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
Phone: (718) 492-5195  
Fax: (718) 492-5727

**Mission:** Bay Ridge Christian Center is committed to bring people to Jesus Christ, disciple them for the membership in His family, develop them to Christ-like maturity, empower them for ministry in the church and the world, to magnify God's name.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Christian non-denominational

**Organization History:** The Bay Ridge Christian Center (a World Harvest Center) is a multi-ethnic, multicultural, bilingual church located in the Bay Ridge/Sunset Park section of Brooklyn, New York. The church has ministered to Brooklyn's Latino and non-Latino communities for 70 years. Fourteen years ago, the church started an outreach ministry called Mission of Mercy that is now set up as a separate 501(c)3. Mission of Mercy started as an outreach effort to feed the homeless. The current executive began by making soup and sandwiches in her own kitchen and going out to feed the squatters. It is now housed in a 6,000 square warehouse. The organization's vision is to help provide a full array of services to enable people to become self-sufficient and productive members of society. The majority of people living in the Bay Ridge/Sunset area of Brooklyn are living below the poverty line so there is a large need for these services. However, people come to the Mission of Mercy from all over Brooklyn and other New York City boroughs. It is one of the only faith-based organizations in the area and the current pastor of Bay Ridge Christian Center has been there for 42 years and is well known and respected. While other programs make it more difficult for many immigrants to get help, Mission of Mercy does not turn people away because they are undocumented immigrants.

**Clientele:** Mission of Mercy currently feeds between 4,000 and 7,000 people each month. The recipients are 35 percent Hispanic, 35 percent Asian, 10 percent white, and 10 percent African Americans. Eighty percent of the Hispanics and Asians are immigrants.

**Staff:** There are two full-time staff, the executive director and the food pantry director. Volunteers do the remainder of the work.

**Budget:** Currently it is roughly \$100,000 because the group experienced a decline in its budget due to drastic cuts in social service funding by the City of New York.

**Funding:** The organization has previously received funding from the city, state government and corporate donors.

### **Services and programs include:**

Mission of Mercy Inc., an emergency food pantry

Medical mission trips

Computer classes

Homeless outreach

Summer day camp for low-income families

Holistic counseling center

High school mentoring program and Scholastic Achievement Test preparation



## Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Rev. Frank Alton, pastor

3300 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
Phone: (213) 389-3191  
www.immanuelpres.org

**Mission:** Immanuel Presbyterian Church is a diverse community seeking to experience and demonstrate the love of Christ by serving God and bearing witness to hope.

**Vision:** To be a growing, learning, multicultural community of spiritual seekers guided by God's Word, prayer and our reformed traditions. We share our gifts in order to live out the liberating news of Jesus Christ by welcoming all people into an experience of mystery and healing through God's Spirit; serving the varied needs of the people of Los Angeles and the world; struggling for justice, while building bridges of peace.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Presbyterian Church USA

**Organizational History:** Immanuel Presbyterian was founded in 1888. Situated on Wilshire Blvd., its surrounding neighborhoods have become home to many of Los Angeles' diverse immigrant communities. It is in close proximity to LA's Koreatown, which has in recent years become an increasingly Latino residential community. By the early 1990s, its older Anglo congregation was in serious decline. To build the congregation, the new pastor, Rev. Frank Alton reached out to the new immigrants and invited them into the church. Reverend Alton has a vision of ministry where the walls of the church are permeable, inviting community members into the building, while drawing members of the congregation into the community. Today, the church holds three worship services on Sunday, the first in Spanish, the second is bilingual and the third is in English. All printed material including the church web page, is in both languages.

**Clientele:** Immanuel serves the diverse neighborhoods of Wilshire Center, Koreatown and Pico Union.

**Staff:** 14 full-time and 13 part-time paid staff, including clergy, administrative, music, nursery school, maintenance/custodial, parish nurse and wedding director. There are also four regular volunteers.

**Budget:** \$1.15 million

**Funding:** Contributions, \$215,000; grants, \$155,000; events and rental of facility, \$500,000; nursery school tuition, \$90,000; interest on investments, \$155,000.

### Programs:

*Advocacy and Community Organizing:* Immanuel Church is an active member of several larger community organizing, labor and immigrant rights networks in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

*Events:* Dia de los Muertos, Posada, Quinceñeras, Via Crucis.

*Social Services:* Food, clothing and referrals to clinics and social agencies, as a member of an organization created and supported by Wilshire Center parishes to care for the community's hungry and homeless.

*Christian Education:* Bible studies and discussions, classes and fellowship groups for adults and children.

*Retreats:* All-church and small group spiritual retreats and ministry group training.

*Internships:* Provided as requested by seminary students seeking experience of urban ministry, with supervision by pastors.

*Film series and Forums:* Occasional issued-based studies and discussions.

*Education:* English as a second language classes and computer literacy.

## Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Betty Cantón-Self, Executive Director

965 Mission St. Ste 514  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (415) 227-0388  
Fax: (415) 543-0442  
[www.icironline.org](http://www.icironline.org)

**Mission:** Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights' mission is to call together people of faith to affirm and defend the rights and dignity of all immigrants and refugees.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** The Coalition works with many faith traditions including Jewish, Buddhists, and Christians represented by Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterian, Lutherans, Baptist and others. In the past two years, outreach efforts have been implemented to reach out to the Muslim communities.

**Organizational History:** The organization was started in early 1993 in the midst of the turmoil over Proposition 187. The founders were religious leaders and people concerned with the anti-immigrant sentiment developed through Proposition 187. The primary goal was to work with faith communities and educate them about the impact of Proposition 187 and the contribution of immigrants to California.

Today, the coalition has a membership base of 2,200 congregations, individuals and organizations with the capacity to mobilize about 30,000 constituencies statewide. Interfaith Coalition has its statewide office in San Francisco and a Southern California office in Los Angeles. It has four regional chapters formed by about 20 local leaders that represent the Coalition in local committees and coalitions. The chapters are located in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Bernardino.

The organization has set the following strategic priorities:

1. Build immigrant leadership and civic participation to strengthen the democratic processes of California.
2. Build healthy inclusive communities by promoting immigrant access to the necessities of life.
3. Educate Californians on the many contributions of immigrants to the state.
4. Promote the diversity of California as an opportunity to enrich our lives.
5. Advocate for humane and equitable public policies and practices that protect family integrity and reunification.

The Coalition establishes support among religious leaders and engages them in seeking faith-based responses to immigrant needs. It also educates immigrants about their role and responsibilities as new members of the society.

**Clientele:** Their target groups are immigrant and non-immigrant congregation members and denominational leaders. Communities served include Latinos from several nationalities, Burmese, Tonga, Haitians, Filipinos, Indonesians, Gambians and others.

**Staff:** Four paid staff and about 80 leaders participating through the chapters leading local efforts.

**Budget:** \$350,000

**Funding:** Religious and private foundations, individual donations, contracts and in-kind support.



## Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (continued)

### Programs:

*Immigrant Leadership and Civic Participation Program:* The Coalition trains immigrant leaders from faith-based organizations on how to increase their civic participation and represent their own community in larger forums. The training includes how federal, state and local legislations are created, how to work with elected officials, community organizing techniques and others.

*Health and Benefits Educational Program:* Since so many immigrants lack information that would help them access benefits for their families, congregations are taking advantage of this training. It teaches immigrants about federal and state programs they might be eligible for, and trains them on how to bring the information back to their communities.

*Advocacy and community organizing:* The Coalition mobilizes immigrants and their congregation to engage in letter writing campaigns in support of various pieces of legislation, such as recent legislation to allow undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers' licenses.

*Community Forums and Public Education:* These are aimed at non-immigrant congregations and denominations. They seek to mobilize these institutions to support immigrant rights, to build new structures in their denominations that are responsive to immigrants, and to train them in how to work with immigrants.

*Cultural Celebrations:* the Coalition uses cultural traditions to educate the larger public about issues that affect their new communities and bring them together to learn about their own cultural differences.

**Latino Pastoral Action Center:**  
**Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, Executive Director**

14 West 170th Street  
Bronx, NY 10452  
(718) 681-2361  
latinaliz@aol.com  
www.lpacministries.com

**Mission Statement:** To educate, equip and empower individuals to provide holistic ministry in church and society.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** The ministry is an outgrowth of several different faith traditions including Pentecostalism, the Reformed Church and liberation theology.

**Organizational History:** The Action Center began as a division of the New York City Mission Society, the oldest private social service agency in New York City. It functioned as a division until 1996, when it became an independent organization. The Mission Society gave the Action Center a \$5 million building located at 170th Street and Jerome Avenue in the Bronx as a gift. It also received start-up funding from the Pew Charitable Trust, Lilly, Rockefeller and other foundations. The building has become an urban ministry complex. After 11 years as a para-church organization, Latino Pastoral Action Center has recently started a church to serve the families who come to their center.

**Clientele:** Currently, it is two-thirds Latino and one-third African-American.

**Staff:** There are between 80 to 100 staff, depending on the programs that are in effect.

**Budget:** \$3 million per year.

**Funding:** Initially, money came from foundations, but recently, the majority of the funding comes from local, state and federal government agencies.

**Programs:**

*Greater Heights Program:* This is primarily a recreational program designed to provide an alternative to the streets and to help young adults with college and career decisions. It meets Monday through Thursday in the Urban Ministry Complex. The recreational activities available to participants include: dance, song writing (rap format), body building, Aikido, a games room and True Souls Cafe, a Friday night alternative to clubs. It also offers seminars on college readiness and resume writing. The target populations are youth and young adults between 15 and 21.

*Family Life Academy:* This is a charter school that currently offers kindergarten through third grade. A new grade is added each year.

*P.R.A.I.S.E.* is a gang prevention program that offers an alternative to incarceration by allowing youth offenders to do community service. The Action Center also runs a peer education program in the public schools.

*New Hope After-School Academy:* The program provides tutoring, help with reading (literacy), instills spiritual values to help participants become socially responsible, and allows for recreational events such as dance, choral, art, karate and a basketball clinic after all homework is done. The program serves children from the ages of five through 14.

*Fatherhood Program:* The program helps fathers improve their parenting skills.

*Welfare-to-Work:* The program offers computer training, English as a second language and GED programs to women who are now on public aid.



## Latino Pastoral Action Center: (continued)

### Programs (continued):

*First Steps:* The program offers a nursery.

*Liberation Manor:* A homeless facility for 60 men and women who are offered residential transitional housing.

*House of Healing:* A post 9/11 counseling center.

*Pastoral Care and Counseling Program:* This program trains pastors to perform mental health services. The pastors attend class twice a week for two years and get a certificate at completion. The program covers topics like urban ethics and practices, psychology, sociology, theology and the educational ministry of the church. In addition, participants are supervised by practicing mental health counselors and professors, and they attend peer group sessions to discuss current cases. The program is offered in both Spanish and English.

*Individual Servant Training Program:* The Action Center provides technical assistance to Latino and other urban churches or faith-based programs in the areas of strategic planning, non-profit management issues and community development. The training is done from a biblical perspective of being a servant in God's kingdom. The Action Center Individual Servant Training Program has three components: one-on-one site visits and consulting; custom designed on-site training; and telephone consulting.

*Association of Church-based Community Ministries:* The Association is a network of more than 55 organizations that have received technical assistance from the Latino Pastoral Action Center or want to network with other church-based community ministry leaders. Members are invited to specifically designed workshops and an annual conference on para-church or church-based community ministry issues.

## Nueva Esperanza

Rev. Luis A. Cortes, Executive Director

4261 N. 5th St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19140  
(215) 324-0746  
www.esperanza.us

**Mission:** Nueva Esperanza is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the establishment of Hispanic-owned-and-operated institutions that lead to the familial, economic and spiritual development of Hispanic communities.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Christian non-denominational

**Organizational History:** In 1982, the Reverend Luis A. Cortes Jr., invited six Hispanic clergy from Philadelphia to meet to address the problems and needs of their ministries in the middle of one of the nation's poorest urban communities, the Latino Corridor of North Philadelphia. Hispanic Clergy, as it is presently known, is now a network of more than 100 congregations representing more than 25 denominations. After undertaking a variety of community service endeavors, Hispanic Clergy expanded its focus to sponsor local housing and economic development projects. In December 1987, Hispanic Clergy established Nueva Esperanza, Inc., a community development corporation, to pioneer those efforts. Today, Nueva Esperanza, Inc. is one of the largest Hispanic faith-based community development corporations in the United States and serves more than 1,000 community members in North Philadelphia each year.

In 2001, working in conjunction with the White House, Rev. Cortes began meeting with United States senators and Representatives to explore the benefits of faith-based funding that would support qualified faith-based organizations across the nation. Rev. Cortes was the only leader representing the Latino community in this dialogue. Throughout the year, Rev. Cortes works closely with a national network of more than 5,000 Latino congregations on issues affecting the Latino community.

Since its founding in 1982, it has been the catalyst for more than \$40 million in economic transactions in a neighborhood where 53 percent of the Latino population, including both immigrants and U.S. born, live at or below the poverty line.

**Clientele:** Nueva Esperanza's clientele is the local community in North Philadelphia, as well as regional and national Latino church leaders. Although it focuses on a community with a dense Latino population, the organization serves anyone from that community, not just Latinos.

**Staffing:** Nueva Esperanza has a staff of 100 people, which includes the charter school, the two-year college program, retreat and campsite, their job training programs, the Hispanic Capacity Program, and Pacto de Esperanza (HIV/AIDS Education initiative.)

**Budget:** Without the charter school, its operating budget is \$8.7 million. With the charter school, it is \$11.8 million.

**Funding:** Seventy-six percent of its budget comes from contributed income; 24 percent is earned, including rent, tuition and fees for service. The main sources of funding are foundations, government and corporations. It receives few individual donations, but hopes to increase this area through its National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast.



## Nueva Esperanza (continued)

### Programs:

*Job Training:* Nueva Esperanza runs the Betances Job Training and Employment Program that started as a result of a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to initiate a welfare-to-work program in the community. Betances conducts five- to-seven-month programs that comprise classroom instruction, internships and job search activities. It prepares people for administrative and medical support careers. The administrative track offers classes in business communications, business math, keyboarding/data entry, and training in Microsoft Access, Excel and Word. Classes in the medical track include anatomy/physiology, medical terminology, ICD9 and CPT coding, as well as keyboarding/transcription. The Resurrection Program established a certification process for Mexican trained construction workers.

*Education:* Nueva Esperanza runs a charter school and has formed a partnership with Eastern University to offer a two-year college education to students without traditional access or success in higher education.

*Campground and Retreat Center:* Nueva Esperanza operates a 150-acre campground where it runs a youth development program.

*Hispanic Capacity Project:* Nueva Esperanza is the recipient of a Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human services to provide technical assistance and modest cash grants to community-based organizations. During their first year, they worked with 140 organizations in five different regions, including the Seattle metro region, Southern California, New York State, Central Florida, which includes Miami and Orlando, and Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. In each case, it does an assessment of the organization's current status and capacity, then tailors services and capacity building to fit the particular needs. No one has done this before within the Hispanic faith community.

*Success Indicators:* Nueva Esperanza has a strong track record in implementing effective programs that stay true to its mission. It takes a holistic approach of faith-based community development that includes housing, economic development, education, employment training and development, youth development, capacity building and health education. Under their grant from Health and Human Services, they have provided training to 634 individuals in 353 organizations in the five regions they are responsible for.

## The Resurrection Project

Raoul Raymondo, Executive Director

1818 S. Paulina St.  
Chicago, IL 60608  
(312) 666-1323  
[www.resurrectionproject.org](http://www.resurrectionproject.org)

**Mission:** The Resurrection Project is a faith-based neighborhood organization whose mission is to build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values, to create healthy communities through education, organizing and community development.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Catholic

**Organization History:** The Resurrection Project was founded in 1990 by a coalition of parishioners from six Catholic parishes in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. Each parish contributed \$5,000 to initiate the program. It now has 13 member parishes. Resurrection Project engages in a wide variety of activities from community organizing to housing development.

**Clientele:** Ninety-four percent Latino (most Mexican immigrants), five percent African-American, and one percent white. Seventy-five percent fall within the age ranges of 19 to 75; 14 percent of clients are children and youth from one to 18 years of age; seniors over the age of 60 make up nine percent of the clients.

**Staff:** There are 28 to 35 full- and part-time staff.

**Annual Budget:** \$2.5 million (2002)

**Funding Sources:** Thirteen percent unexpected revenue (insurance and legal settlements); 39 percent earned income; 18 percent government grants; and 30 percent corporate fundraising and non-profit grants.

### Programs:

*Education and youth:* The Resurrection Project is involved in youth organizing and leadership development, where youth work with community organizers to tackle educational issues that are relevant to them. The most significant issue has been regarding undocumented students. Resurrection Project students work collectively to advocate for change at the state and federal level so legislation and policies can be created that ease the burden they shoulder.

*"Pathways to College Workshop Series"* is an initiative developed to increase the number of Latino students entering and graduating from higher educational institutions. It provides community high school students with workshops on various aspects of the college selection and application process. These programs were developed after holding a number of focus groups that identified the needs of a community confronted with overburdened, unresponsive and over-crowded high schools. Coming from a predominantly immigrant community, many of the students who attend the workshops are the first in their family to have the opportunity to attend a post-secondary institution. There are many cultural and instructional concerns that must be addressed. The workshops cover topics like why go to college, financial aid, scholarships, writing a personal statement and choosing the best college.

*La Casa* is a place where students who come from large families living in small quarters can live, to make it easier to study.

*Health care:* Resurrection Project is a partner in the R.E.A.C.H. (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) 2010 Stand Against Cancer initiative. This is a faith-based initiative focused on reducing economic, racial and ethnic disparities in breast and cervical cancer by encouraging screenings by all women, especially minorities.

*Housing:* Ten years ago, organizations like The Resurrection Project successfully produced affordable housing at a low cost. But recently, the housing landscape looks very different in its target communities, as the competition for property and land increases.



## The Resurrection Project (continued)

### Programs (continued):

*Neighborhood Center:* Offers a group of trained social service providers who host health seminars, offer English as a second language classes and music classes, and connect people to lawyers and the local Social Security or public assistance offices. The Center also provides a food pantry and clothing exchange.

*Immigration:* Being situated within these communities, The Resurrection Project's Community Organizing Division links immigrant families with a variety of social services, as well as organizations like the Illinois Coalition, which work to alleviate many issues these families face by advocating for immigration policy reform.

*Safety:* Aside from relationship building, block club meetings and meetings with local government departments and community police, The Resurrection Project has strategies that work through small community events and activities to take back the neighborhood block-by-block and relationship-by-relationship. Some of these strategies include street masses, an annual youth street basketball tournament organized by community leaders, member parishes and block clubs, and other sporadic events that target crime hotspots, such as festivals, police roll calls or community clean-up days.

**Success Indicators:** The Resurrection Project has built 136 new homes for low- and moderate-income families, and renovated 12 buildings to create 156 affordable rental units. It developed two childcare centers that serve 400 children. The project has also assisted 86 local contractors to begin, develop and expand their own construction businesses. It issued 116 loans totaling more than \$2.2 million, while helping cover 300 new home, conventional, refinance and home improvement loans. In addition, The Resurrection Project created a bilingual second-stage housing program for homeless single mothers. It has generated a total of \$65 million in community investment.

**Saint Pius V**  
**Father Charles Dawm**

1919 S. Ashland Ave.  
Chicago, Ill 60608  
(312) 226-6161

**Mission:** The Parish of St. Pius V is an open and welcoming community of faith, hope and love, committed to the mission of promoting the Reign of God in society. This is realized by:

- developing the understanding and the spirit of the gospel of Jesus;
- promoting the union between people of distinct races and cultures with a preferential option for the poor;
- bringing forth justice, peace, liberation from oppression in various forms, personal and communal maturity, and the material and social development of families;
- conserving the cultural traditions and celebrating our communion through our sacred liturgies.

**Religious Background and Affiliation:** Roman Catholic. Since the turn of the century, run by the Dominicans, a religious order of sisters, brothers, priests, affiliates and laity dedicated to the pursuit of preaching on the margins of our society.

**Organizational History:** Located in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, St Pius was first established as an Irish parish in 1874. By the end of the 1960s, Spanish masses had been integrated into the parish schedule, and in 1972, a shrine to honor the Virgin of Guadalupe was installed, further testimony of the parish's increasing Mexican presence. Today, there are 4,000 families in the parish and 85 percent of them are Mexican. Ninety percent of the families in the area are considered to be living at the national poverty level. The per capita income stands at \$4,200 per year. Sociologist Lowell Livezey describes the parish as follows: "Saint Pius enacts its incarnational theology by focusing spirituality on social-justice issues that affect the parish community, as well as the neighborhood of Pilsen more generally."<sup>89</sup>

**Clientele:** More than 4,000 families are served. Members of the parish come from the Americas, Poland, India and Sri Lanka. More than 90 percent of the parish are Latino families, with a vast majority Mexican families. Approximately 65 percent of people who participate in the parish live in the neighborhood.

**Staff:** More than 25 ministers serving as priests, counselors, youth ministers, religious education educators and coordinators of social services, and volunteers.

**Budget:** The parish has a budget of more than \$700,000 that comes from the generosity and support of its families, friends and the help of foundations.

**Programs:**

**Emergency Services:** The parish has a soup kitchen and a second-hand store that offers clothes and food to neighbors and the homeless. The parish also helped found the *Mision San Jose Obrero*, a homeless shelter for men.

**Education:** The parish runs a Catholic grammar school and also allots free space to *Universidad Popular* in their building. *Universidad Popular* teaches English as a second language. The parish runs *Casa Juan Diego Youth Center*, an after-school program with tutoring, Karate, and computer training. The youth center is also used for catechism and confirmation. They run a parenting program designed to battle the drugs and gang problems in Pilsen.



## Saint Pius V (continued)

### Programs (continued):

*Counseling:* The parish employs seven counselors on staff to work with families on issues including domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, and family dynamics. Domestic violence proves to be a major problem within the community's families. Believing that the "machismo" mentality is partly responsible, the parish is committed to helping people change and heal. There are approximately 120 women and 20 men who currently get help through the counseling program.

*Legal Aid Clinic:* St. Pius V is one of the supportive organizations with the *Chicago Legal Clinic*, a legal aid clinic run by the *Legal Assistance Foundation* to handle a wide variety of legal issues.

*Community Organizing and Advocacy:* The parish is one of the founding members of *The Resurrection Project*, a community organization representing 13 area parishes to organize the community and create social change in areas of immigration, education, affordable housing, safety and health. It also participates in the *Day Labor Organizing Project* that works with local unions and politicians to improve the conditions of low wage workers, many of whom are Hispanic immigrants.

## Templo Calvario Community Development Corporation

Rev. Danny de Leon, Pastor  
Lee de Leon, Executive Director

2617 W. 5th St.  
Santa Ana, CA 92703  
(717) 834-9331

**Vision:** Daily we work for the future where healthy and vibrant communities surround the families we serve today.

**Mission:** Working with key stakeholders in our communities, Templo Calvario Community Development Corporation can best serve families and solve critical community needs by strategically mobilizing vital resources in education, economic development, affordable housing, and senior and youth services.

**Organization History:** The development corporation was set up as a separate 501(c)3 in 2003 by Templo Calvario in Santa Ana, California. Templo Calvario has a membership of 7,000, making it the largest Hispanic church in the nation according to *Charisma Magazine*. The church was founded more than 75 years ago and is part of the Assemblies of God. Today, roughly two-thirds of the congregation are immigrants. Twenty years ago, the church formalized its benevolent work by establishing a ministry called *Obras de Amor* – works of love – which provides food, shelter and other emergency services to hundreds of families every week. Five years ago, the church formed a network called the *Kingdom Coalition*, made up of 60 other churches stretching from Los Angeles to San Diego. Templo Calvario has been supplying surplus food to these churches so they could, in turn, give out food in their communities. The coalition has come to function as a small clearinghouse for these churches through which Templo also provides access to small grants and some technical assistance to these smaller Hispanic immigrant churches.

**Staff:** *Obras de Amor* has a staff of five to six full-time, four to five part-time people and about 40 to 50 volunteers. The newly opened charter school has another 15 staff.

**Funding:** *Obras de Amor* has a budget of \$160,000 to \$170,000 per year of which half comes from the church and other half is raised outside. For some areas, the church charges a fee-for-service. With the establishment of the Development Corporation, the projected budget for the coming year is \$1.5 million.

**Programs:** Over last year, the church has established a community development corporation as a separate 501(c)3. The church leadership were concerned that most of their work was providing relief, but not addressing some of the underlying problems. The central focus of the new community development corporation will be economic development. It will focus on jobs and starting new businesses. Initially, it is planning to develop a company that will do some home care as a job creation mechanism. The local office of aging says these services are needed among the aging population living in Orange County. The objective is to train 40 people in home healthcare, and also provide senior transportation services. It also intends to become active in providing affordable housing, adult education, including English as a second language, GED and computer training, targeting the immigrant population of Santa Ana, which has the lowest number of high school graduates in the country. It is also planning to provide after-school youth services. Over the next year, the community development corporation will take over all of the services the church has been providing.

**Edward B. Cole Sr. Academy:** The new not-for-profit community development corporation enables the congregation to open a charter school housed in the church.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The large numbers of recently arrived Hispanic immigrants pose an enormous challenge to North American faith-based institutions. Immigrants arrive in the United States with great optimism and hope for their future. But those who come poor, with little education, and settle in poor communities, quickly join this country's new servant class. They are hired to do the most menial, dangerous and backbreaking work in our economy, while at the same time, told they are unwanted and undesirable. They face the daunting task of not only providing for their families' survival, but also creating the means of upward mobility for their children within one single generation. Their U.S.-born children face tremendous risks as they encounter a combination of hostility and neglect from public schools, police and other mainstream institutions. Immigrants who come from poor villages throughout Latin America and settle in large U.S. cities experience deep alienation from the prevailing culture. They have been disconnected from their traditional communities and thrust into a society that values individualism above all else.

The challenge for the church is to become a place where all poor Hispanic immigrants can find spiritual healing and the strength to face their difficult circumstances. It must be the one place where immigrants who have been alienated from life within the United States can recreate community. The church is being challenged to become more than a place where poor Hispanics come for food, clothing and other basic necessities of life. It is being challenged to engage in holistic forms of family-based ministry that strengthens families and protects the second and third generations from falling into the spiral of downward mobility. In some cases, these efforts lead to community organizing and advocacy; in others – to community development efforts.

The resources necessary to tackle the enormity of this challenge are in very short supply. Many of the small Hispanic immigrant congregations lack financial resources to support even one full-time pastor, let alone engage in broader ministry. Yet, even the large well-established institutionalized denominations including Catholics and Protestants, lack the resources needed to sustain the holistic forms of ministry so urgently needed. Despite their lack of resources, Hispanic faith institutions do a remarkable amount of service work, much of it relying heavily on volunteers.

There is an urgent need for more collaborative efforts among clusters of churches, as is modeled by the Resurrection Project. Equally important is the need to strengthen faith-based advocacy and community organizing efforts to protect the rights of the most vulnerable immigrants and to ensure that larger public and private institutional resources are directed towards the work of those faith institutions in most direct contact with the immigrants.

One of the most encouraging developments has been the emergence of new networks of Hispanic faith-based practitioners through which capacity building and leadership training is occurring. It is crucial that this work reaches all corners of the faith-community, including the thousands of small independent Hispanic congregations. This on-going work is crucial to the ability of the churches to face the challenges before them.

In an effort to further strengthen these institutions serving Hispanic immigrants, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Focus on the urgent needs of immigrants and their children, recognizing that the children are at risk of becoming assimilated into downward mobility within a single generation.

2. Develop more of a research base on what strategies are most successful in creating upward mobility within the second- and third-generation Hispanic immigrants.
3. Promote the use of those strategies that are found to be successful in encouraging upward mobility within the second and third generations.
4. Develop ministry models for Hispanic immigrants that are family centered.
5. Support efforts to build networks and provide capacity building and leadership training among Hispanic clergy.
6. Support the creation of collaborative efforts by clusters of churches to provide holistic ministry.
7. Work with those denominations experiencing an influx of new Hispanic immigrants, or whose older congregations are now located in communities with growing numbers of Hispanic immigrants.
8. Encourage denominations with significant numbers of Hispanic immigrant congregations to see these congregations as an important area of ministry and therefore, ensure that pastors are given the support needed to sustain healthy, viable local congregations capable of some service delivery.
9. Increase the funding available to support holistic forms of ministry among Hispanic faith institutions.
10. Increase the funding available to support advocacy and community organizing efforts among predominantly Hispanic congregations. Support is especially needed to support efforts to improve the wages and working conditions of low skilled immigrant workers.
11. Expand non-traditional forms of theological and pastoral leadership training that is relevant to the immigrants.
12. Increase the number of part-time seminary programs relevant to the traditions and needs of active Hispanic clergy.



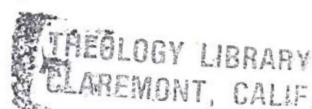
## End Notes

- 1 Latin America includes South and Central America as well as Spanish speaking nations in the Caribbean.
- 2 The U.S. Census does not differentiate between documented and undocumented residents, however sampling biases lead to an undercount of the number of undocumented immigrants.
- 3 Data on birth rates are available at Brady E. Hamilton, Paul D. Sutton, and Stephanie J. Ventura. (August 3, 2003) "Revised birth and Fertility Rates for the 1990s and New Rates for Hispanic Populations, 1990-2001, United States," *National Center for Vital Statistics*, Department of Health and Human Services, National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 51, No. 12.
- 4 For purposes of this report Hispanic, Latino, and Latin American are used interchangeably. The census data on Latin Americans living in the United States does not distinguish between documented and undocumented immigrants.
- 5 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.
- 6 Ibid., 57-58.
- 7 Interview with Dr. Jesse Miranda, Director of the Urban and Latino Studies Program at Vanguard University and President of AMEN, September 3, 2003.
- 8 Urban Leadership Institute, "The Hispanic Family and Faith," 1998, 8-9.
- 9 Virgilio Elizondo, *The Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 32.
- 10 Caleb Rosado, "The Church, the City, and the Compassionate Christ," in *Voces: Voices from the Hispanic Church*, ed. Justo L. Gonzales, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 75.
- 11 Leo R. Chavez, *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society* (United States: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 1998), 51.
- 12 David Sikkink and Edwin I. Hernandez, "Religion Matters: Predicting Schooling Success Among Latino Youth," (Notre Dame: Institute for Latino Studies, January, 2003).
- 13 Interview with Dr. Jesse Miranda, September 3, 2003.
- 14 Elizondo, 45.
- 15 The U.S. Census for 2000 reports a Hispanic population of 35.3 million.
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